



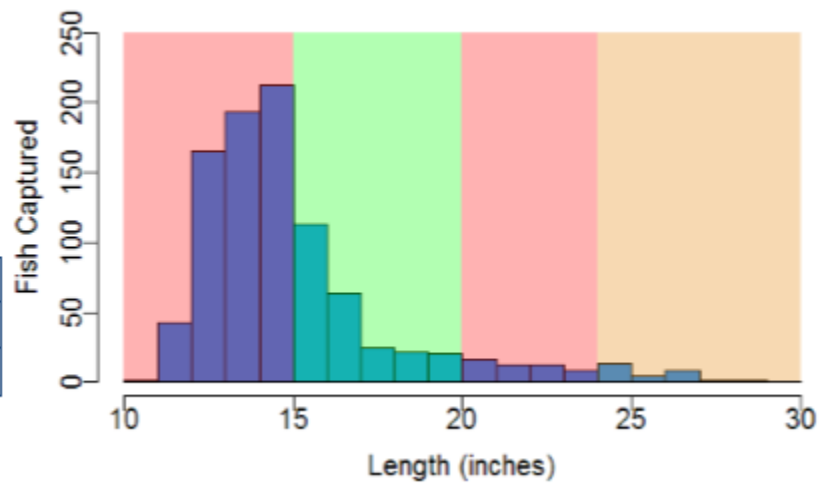
Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Lake Chippewa (Chippewa Flowage), Sawyer County, 2019

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on the west side of the Chippewa Flowage from April 25-27, 2019 to assess the adult walleye, northern pike, yellow perch, and black crappie populations in the lake. Up to 12 nets were set overnight for three nights which resulted in 27 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey conducted on June 3 and June 4, 2019 documented the status of bluegill, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and non-game species, but also provided information on juvenile walleye. A total of 12 miles of shoreline were shocked. Quality, preferred, and memorable sizes referenced in this summary are based on standard proportions of world record lengths developed for each species by the American Fisheries Society.

Walleye (Adult)



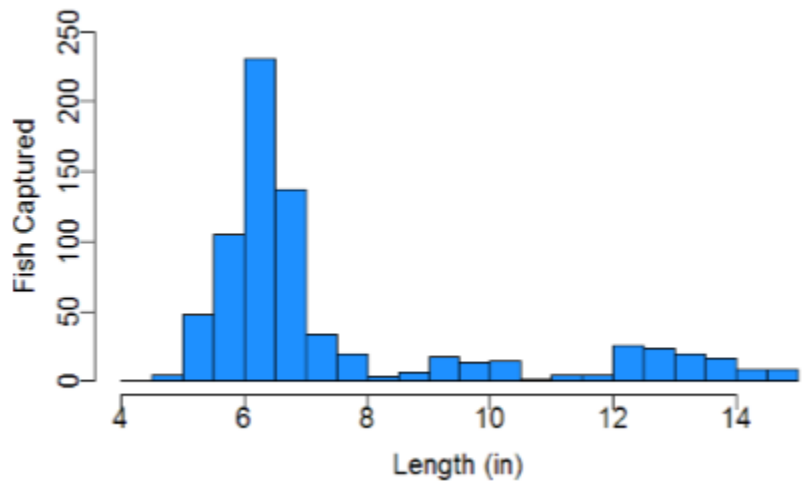
Captured 34 per net-night ≥ 10 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 15 "	34%
Preferred Size ≥ 20 "	8%



Walleye (Juvenile)



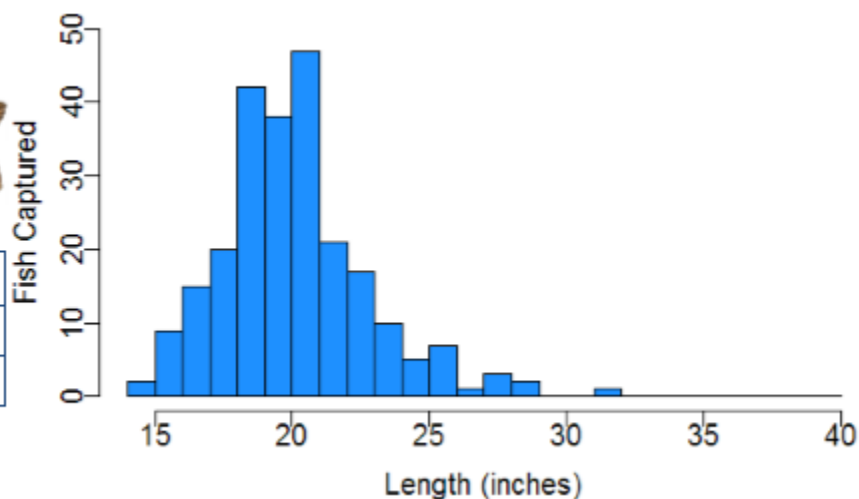
Captured 62 per mile ≤ 15 inches



Northern Pike



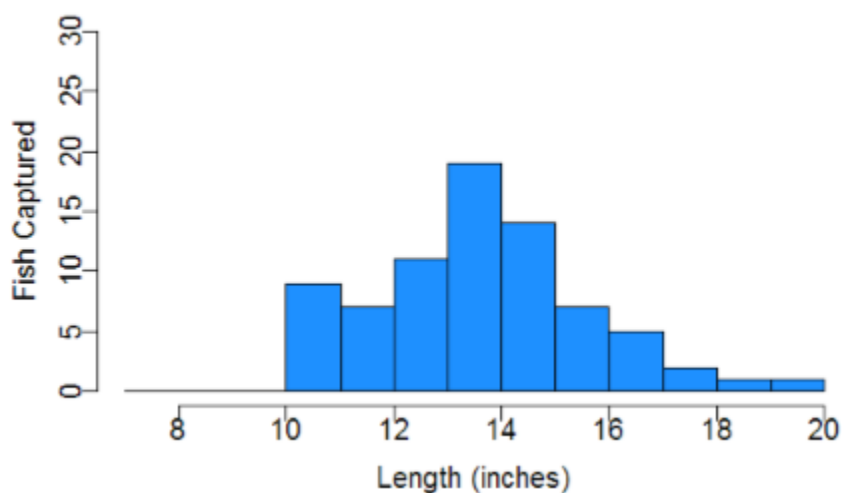
Captured 9 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 21 "	28%
Preferred Size ≥ 28 "	1%



Smallmouth bass



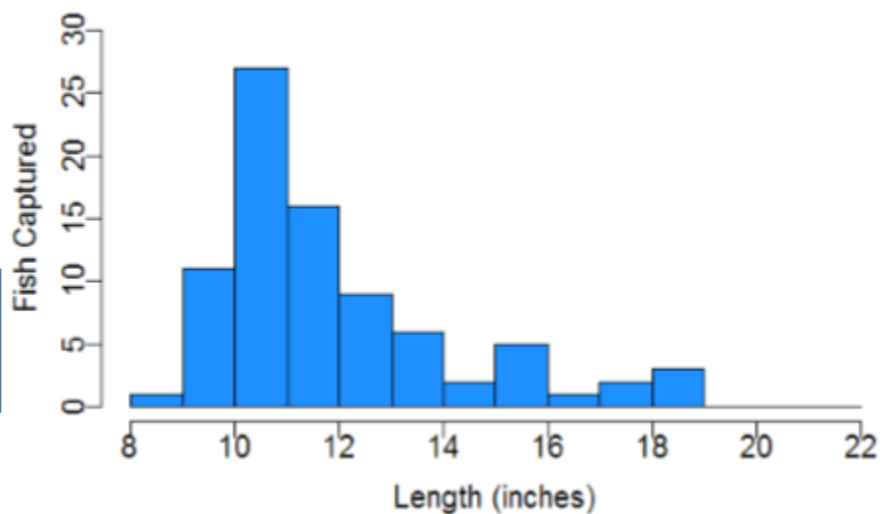
Captured 6 per mile ≥ 7 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 11 "	88%
Preferred Size ≥ 14 "	39%
Memorable Size ≥ 17 "	5%



Largemouth bass



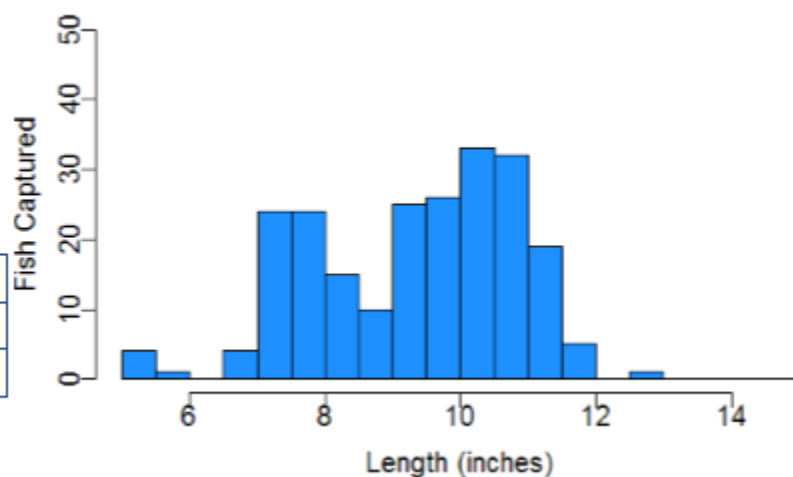
Captured 7 per mile ≥ 8 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 12 "	34%
Preferred Size ≥ 15 "	13%



Black Crappie



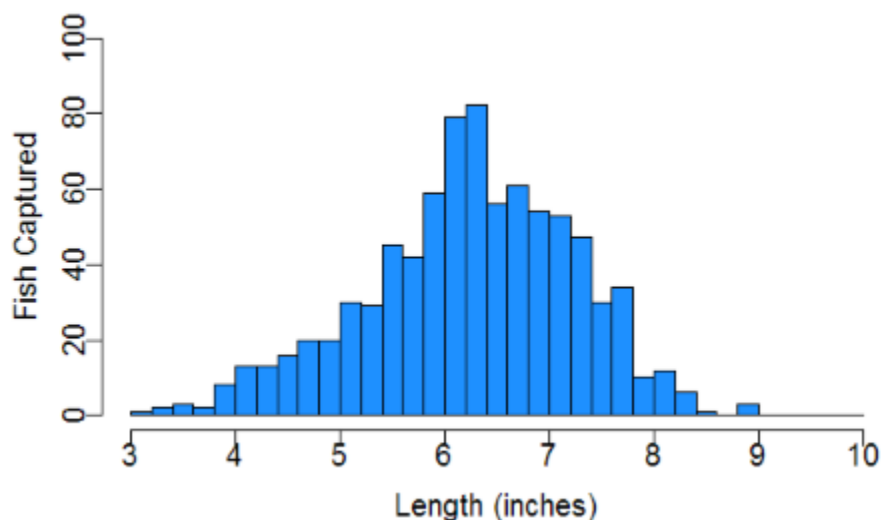
Captured 9 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 8 "	74%
Preferred Size ≥ 10 "	10%



Bluegill



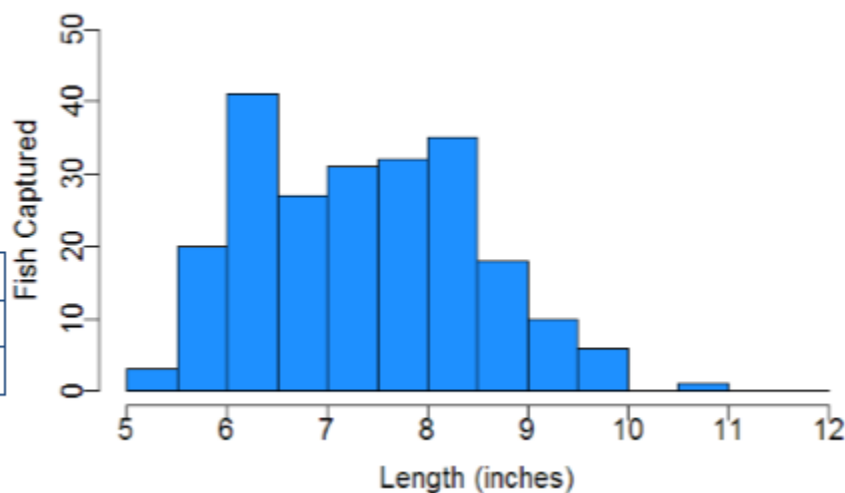
Captured 277 per mile ≥ 3 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 6 "	64%
Preferred Size ≥ 8 "	3%



Yellow Perch



Captured 8 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 8 "	31%
Preferred Size ≥ 10 "	<1%



Summary of Results

The 2019 DNR survey of the Chippewa Flowage put emphasis on certain species and did not target others. Walleye were a main target, as were bass and bluegill. Crappie and northern pike data should be interpreted with some caution, since net locations were selected mostly to capture walleye. There was no specific effort made to survey muskellunge so no information on that species appears in this report (even though a few were still captured).

Walleye are in the midst of a nice comeback on the Chippewa Flowage after a period of time when natural reproduction and overall abundance dipped. In 2013, fyke net catch rates for walleye were 9.6 per net night on the west side of the flowage. In 2019 we captured 34 per net night. With the increase in abundance we have observed some changes in the walleye size structure. A large percentage of the population on the west side of the flowage is now in the 12-15 inch range. Still, 26% of walleye in this survey were in the 15-20 inch “harvest slot” (green highlighted area above), and an additional 8% were over 20 inches. Juvenile walleye were very abundant during the electrofishing portion of this survey. A strong natural year class from 2018 (seen above as 5-7 inch walleye) was prominently on display. Continued strong recruitment points to good walleye fishing in coming years.

Northern pike were captured at a relatively low rate in comparison to other recent surveys of the Chippewa Flowage, but this likely had to do with net locations. Size of pike in 2019 was a continuation of what has been observed in past surveys. Around $\frac{3}{4}$ of pike sampled are typically below 21 inches and very few are over 28 inches. Small pike are victims of their own abundance, and anglers are encouraged to harvest them.

Smallmouth bass have been a nice surprise on the west side of the Chippewa Flowage over the last few years. Previously, smallmouth had existed mostly on the east side of the flowage and were rare on the west side. Smallmouth abundance has slowly climbed over the last few years, from 3-4 per mile in past years up to 6 per mile observed here. Most smallmouth captured were “quality size” fish, with some even eclipsing 17 inches. Largemouth abundance was similar to smallmouth, but size of largemouth was poor. Many largemouth sampled were only 10-12 inches long.

Black crappie were captured at a low rate in comparison to previous surveys (a result once again influenced by net location and timing). However, size of crappie was impressive. Crappie over 10 inches were more common than in previous surveys, with many crappie over 11 inches also observed.

Bluegill abundance appears to be increasing on the west side of the Chippewa Flowage, and with that increase in abundance comes a slight decline in size. While many quality-size bluegill are still present, bluegill over 8 inches made up a lower percentage of our sample than in previous surveys.

Yellow perch were captured at a moderate to low rate, but few large perch were observed.



Walleye were a focus of 2019 survey efforts on the Chippewa Flowage. Fisheries Technician Evan Sniadajewski and warden/volunteer Aaron Koshatka show off some top-end walleye from the fyke netting portion of the survey. Photo by Max Wolter.

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County

Survey conducted by Max Wolter, Scott Braden (Fisheries Technician), and Evan Sniadajewski (Fisheries Technician)

Special thanks to volunteers: Jake McCusker, Linda Treland, Randy Tuggle, Dan Richards, Bob Kondrasek, Bill Fetzner, and Aaron Koshatka

Reviewed and Approved by Michael Vogelsang – District Supervisor